

# 31<sup>st</sup> MEU NEWS

UNIT 35621  
FPO AP 96606-5621



January 5, 2009

## Commander's Message



The 31<sup>st</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit has hit the ground running following some well deserved leave and liberty over the holidays. This month we will say goodbye to Battalion Landing Team 3/1 and welcome Battalion Landing Team 3/5. The periodic swap out of the MEU's Ground Combat Element, while still maintaining our required readiness alert posture to respond to contingencies, is something unique to the 31<sup>st</sup> MEU. The other six MEU's in the Marine Corps normally stand down for a period of several months while swapping out units and retraining to the required missions. Over the years, the 31<sup>st</sup> MEU has developed a unique preparation and compressed training plan that facilitates this type of "in stride" unit swap.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate and thank LtCol Ben Watson and the Marines and Sailors of BLT 3/1. During their six months here in the Pacific, they performed absolutely superbly and made a significant contribution to the national security of the United States. Since the day they stepped off the plane, they maintained a very high standard of excellence in every endeavor. I wish them luck and a safe journey back to CONUS.

I would like to welcome LtCol Chris Dowling and the Marines and Sailors of BLT 3/5 to Okinawa. Following a rigorous six month training program in California, they are well prepared for service with America's only full time forward deployed Marine Expeditionary Unit.



It won't be long before the MEU is back aboard ship and we are on our way to the Kingdom of Thailand for Exercise Cobra Gold, a bilateral exercise with our Thai Marine Corps counterparts which takes place from 6-24 February. For that reason, this issue of our monthly newsletter is once again dedicated to pre-deployment personal and family readiness. No matter how many times someone has deployed, there are always things that need to be reviewed, updated and discussed amongst the family prior to departure.

As always, I encourage you to check out the MEU's website at least once a week for the latest updates. It's a good source of news and information. Here's the link:

<http://www.marines.mil/units/marforpac/iimef/31stmeu/Pages/default.aspx>

Semper Fidelis, Col Paul L. Damren

## Chaplain's Corner

by Chaplain Bailey

As 2008 has come to an end, I hope it's a year that you can look back on with great joy because your hopes and dreams have been fulfilled. Nonetheless, as a new year begins for many it can be a time for resolutions. Resolutions involve actions and/or actions in a person's personal and professional life that need improvement. It's rather easy to evaluate those things in our life that need improvement. I think the Dr. Phil question of "How's that working for you?" is a great way to evaluate those attitudes and actions in our life from 2008 that need improvement. At times it can be difficult breaking some of our old habits or patterns in our life. Quite often we make a resolution on the first of January to change but by the second of January we break it.

It's important to tap into all the resources available to help us fulfill the resolutions we make in a new year. The greatest resource available to us that often is forgotten is in the realm of the spiritual. One of the great truths pertaining to change comes from Isaiah 43:18-19. God reminds not to not dwell on the past, forget all that – it is nothing compared to what he is going to do. He wants to do something new. In fact, he has already begun and we just need to look for it. His desire is to make a new path for us through whatever our wilderness might be. He will create rivers in the dry wasteland.

Perhaps one's relationship with God could be described as stated in Isaiah as a dry wasteland. This new year is a great time to renew your relationship with God, family and friends. Renewing a relationship with God can involve taking time to be still and know that he is God (Psalm 46:10). May your new year be filled with fulfilled resolutions.

### Pre-Deployment Brief for the 31<sup>st</sup> MEU Command Element

Tuesday January 20<sup>th</sup>

6-7:00pm

Camp Courtney Chapel

On-Site Childcare will be provided

Representatives from numerous organizations on island will be present

### Parents/Sponsors of DoDEA students

Per the Inspector General Office, MCB Camp Butler requests that you complete the on-line DoDEA Customer Satisfaction Survey which is noted below.

Either DODDS Okinawa District link below should work:

<http://www.okinawa.pac.dodea.edu/>

<https://webapps.dodea.edu/CSS0809/survey/intro1.cfm?ST=P>

Thank You!

## **MCCS Youth Sports Soccer Registration**

The MCCS Semper Fit Youth Sports program is beginning soccer registration during January 1-15 for children and teens ages 5-18. Parents may register at any MCCS Athletic Center or Boys & Girls Club. Proof-of-age is required at time of sign-up.

Fees are as follows:

\$28.00 for your first child.

\$23.00 for your second child.

\$18.00- Your third child and on

Season Dates are as follows:

Coaches' Meetings: 17-19 Feb.

Practice Begins: 9 Mar.

Season Begins: 21 Mar.

Season Ends: 6 Jun.

## **31<sup>st</sup> MEU Command Element Family Readiness Program**

While the unit is deployed, the Family Readiness Program is the means by which families receive all official messages from the command. Our Family Readiness Officer and Family Readiness Assistants are trained to provide both information and referral services to spouses and immediate family members of deployed Marines and Sailors.

**Guiding Principles:** The Marine Corps has provided the command with the supporting tools to establish a successful family readiness program. Along with those tools, our program will be based on the following guiding principles:

- The program will provide both a communications and referral network for spouses and communication links for other immediate family members
- The program will emphasize the establishment of personal relationships based on mutual trust, shared experiences and friendship
- The program is based on a desire to reach out to others and not upon rank or billet
- The program will utilize multiple communications means such as the Mass Communications Tool, phone calls, e-mail, automated information line, and official MEU website to pass information but will always emphasize personal communication, confirmation of receipt of messages and ( when required) responsive follow-up as measures of success
- Confidentiality and personal privacy policies will be strictly enforced
- Information will be passed in as timely a manner as possible within the bounds of operational security. All spouses and immediate family members will have equal access to the information

**Program Goal:** Marines and Sailors of the 31<sup>st</sup> MEU remain focused and committed to their assigned

mission knowing that their spouses and immediate family members can count on our family readiness program to keep them well informed and to provide timely referral support in the face of unexpected events.

## **What is a Family Readiness Assistant?**

Family Readiness Assistants are spouses of 31st MEU Marines and Sailors that have volunteered their time to assist the Family Readiness Command Team in the execution of the Unit Family Readiness Program. Family Readiness Assistants shall embody the unit commander's family readiness goals and possess a desire to work with the Marines/Sailors and their families in order to increase family readiness.

## **Who can become a Family Readiness Assistant?**

To be a Family Readiness Assistant, the applicant must.

- ~ Be the spouse of a Marine or Sailor in the unit
- ~ Complete Family Readiness Volunteer Training.
- ~ Complete Lifestyles, Insights, Networking, Knowledge, Skills (L.I.N.K.S.) Training.
- ~ Assist the Family Readiness Officer by welcoming families, making individual contact with families as necessary, assisting with information and referral services, and providing feedback from unit families.

## **How can you become a Family Readiness Assistant?**

[Simply contact the 31<sup>st</sup> MEU's Family Readiness Officer by clicking here.](#)

## **TUTOR.COM**

MCCS Libraries offers Free Live Online Homework Help Marines and their families can now get help with school work thanks to a new contract with Tutor.com. Students of any age, from kindergartner to high school senior, as well as adult students, may use the service to connect to an expert tutor for help in math, science, social studies and English.

The Tutor.com network of over 2,200 professional tutors has delivered more than 3.5 million one-to-one tutoring sessions. Each tutor has earned a degree and has completed extensive background checks. Online homework help is available at installation MCCS libraries or 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by visiting [www.usmc-mccs.org/library/tutor/](http://www.usmc-mccs.org/library/tutor/)

All that is needed is a computer with Internet access. Authorized MCCS patrons who want to use the site from home must contact their installation library for password and login information.

## **Off-Base Cultural Events**

### **Cherry Blossom Festival**

31 January & 1 February

Starts 1100

Nago, Nago City

Free or see MCCS Tours+ for tour details



### **Scholarships for Military Children**

Applications for DeCA's 2009 Scholarships for Military Children Program are available now in commissaries worldwide or online at [www.militaryscholar.org](http://www.militaryscholar.org). The \$1,500 scholarships are available to unmarried children under the age of 21 (up to 23, if enrolled in school) of military active duty, retired, Guard, and Reserve service members.

Applications must be turned in by close of business on Feb. 18, 2009.

### **Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP)**

If you have a spouse, child or dependent parent with a **medical** or **special educational need**, please contact the Exceptional Family Member Program

This program ensures that the medical and/or educational needs of your loved ones are met each time you PCS. EFMP staff are also available for individual appointments and unit briefs at all camps upon request.

### **ADD/ADHD Workshop**

20 JANUARY, TUESDAY, 0900-1200, FOSTER, BLDG. 439

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD) is a biological condition characterized by poor attention, distractibility and/or hyperactive behaviors.

Join us for this workshop conducted by doctors from Educational & Developmental Intervention Services (EDIS) to learn more about the diagnosis and symptoms of ADD/ADHD, classroom accommodations, behavioral management and more.

**Childcare Available!!**

*For more information about the Exceptional Family Member Program, call 645-9237/7494 or email [efmp@okinawa.usmc-mccs.org](mailto:efmp@okinawa.usmc-mccs.org).*

# Classes on Island



**American  
Red Cross**

## **Babysitter's Training w/ Infant & Child CPR**

**Fee: \$45.00**

Jan 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> 2 Day Course

9<sup>th</sup> 5pm-9pm, 10<sup>th</sup> 9am-3pm Camp Courtney

*Students must be at least 11 years old to take the course and must be 12 years old to baby sit on Marine Corps bases. Class covers child development & safety, diapering, feeding, responding to emergencies, and child & infant CPR and basic First Aid.*

## **Volunteer Orientation**

6 Jan 9am Foster

20 Jan 1pm Foster

## **Lay Responder Adult/Child/Infant CPR and First Aid**

**Fee: \$35.00**

10 Jan 0800 - 1600 Foster

## **Japanese Translated Adult/Child/Infant CPR and First Aid**

**Fee \$25.00**

24 Jan 0800 - 1600 Foster

## **Dog First Aid & CPR**

**Fee: \$25.00**

10 Jan 0900-1230 Kadena

## **Marine Corps Family Team Building Family Readiness Training Schedule January 2009**

### **L.I.N.K.S.**

#### **LINKS for Spouses**

January 28th & 29th

9am-12:30pm

Registration Required

### **J.S.O.**

#### **JN Open Forum**

January 9th

10am-1pm

Registration Required

### **Spouses Learning Series**

#### **SPACE-A SEMINAR**

January 27<sup>th</sup>

6:30pm-8:30pm

Registration Required

Participants must be registered to attend.

For more information contact Marine Corps Family Team Building at **645-3204**

## Spouses Pre-Deployment Checklist

- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have your FRO/Family Readiness Assistant's (FRA) name and phone number?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does your FRO have your up to date contact information if you return to CONUS?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you know your spouse's social security number?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are your passports up to date?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is your ID card or your children's' about to expire?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have you arranged for an ID card for any child who will be turning 10 years old before your spouse's return?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have you discussed car maintenance or repair work with your spouse?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are you prepared to pay for Road Tax (May) and/or JCI on your vehicle while your spouse is deployed?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you and your spouse have up to date wills? Are they in a safe, convenient place?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have an up to date power of attorney?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you know how to pay rent, utilities, and other monthly expenses?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you know where important family documents are kept?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have a signed authorization form for dependent medical treatment in your absence?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do your family members in the States know how to reach you or your spouse in case of emergency?

## ONLINE RESOURCES

[www.marines.mil/units/marforpac/iiimef/31stmeu/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.marines.mil/units/marforpac/iiimef/31stmeu/Pages/default.aspx)

This is the official 31st MEU website! Save this link to your "Favorites" on your computer. The website is updated frequently to keep you informed on what your Marine or Sailor is doing at work.

[www.mccsokinawa.com](http://www.mccsokinawa.com)

This site offers a ton of information about what is being offered on all Marine Corps bases on the island. The site has links and information for over 80 MCCS programs offered on Okinawa.

[www.kadenaservices.com](http://www.kadenaservices.com)

Provides information about activities and services the Air Force offers to all military members and their families here on Okinawa. It also contains links to Army MWR events on Torii Station and Okuma's online reservation page. Click on PETS to get links to the Vet Clinics and Karing Kennels.

[www.japanupdate.com](http://www.japanupdate.com)

Provides updates on what's going on Okinawa.

[www.okinawahai.com](http://www.okinawahai.com)

This website is designed by military spouses for military spouses on Okinawa.

[www.mcbbutler.usmc.mil](http://www.mcbbutler.usmc.mil)

Provides valuable information on policies and procedures that apply directly to all residents stationed on Marine Corps bases Japan.

[www.okinawa.pac.dodea.edu](http://www.okinawa.pac.dodea.edu)

This site can answer any question you might have pertaining to the on-base school system on Okinawa

[www.aafes.com](http://www.aafes.com)

This site is your resource for all AAFES activities.

[www.okinawayardsales.com](http://www.okinawayardsales.com)

Great site to buy used items and sell your unwanted items.

